

**Pelham Middle School**  
**Inclusion/ Special Education Needs Policy**

Pelham Middle School supports all students in their development as we strive to empower them to become innovators, lifelong learners, and future leaders. To this end, we actively engage all students in a quality educational program so that they may reach their fullest potential as inquiring, communicating, knowledgeable, compassionate, reflective and caring learners within a global community.

We accomplish this by providing quality instruction for all students in a manner that supports continuous and consistent commitment to understanding, awareness, and respect. We recognize that our strategies, dependent as they are upon students' individual needs, need to change and adapt every year. We value student diversity in all its forms, and seek to celebrate differences in student learning as a positive component of our school program. We also recognize that these differences extend beyond students who fall under legal designations and obligations, and strive to include a differentiated approach to instruction that is sensitive to student differences in every one of our classrooms, including those students who may benefit from opportunities for enrichment or extension of classroom activities.

We define quality instruction as that which includes multiple and differentiated teaching strategies to provide all students with equal access in order to meet the learning objectives of the International Baccalaureate - Middle Years Programme. Students are encouraged to demonstrate their understanding through multiple intelligences and individual learning styles. Our grade-level teams provide support to students and consistently monitor their progress. Our guidance counselors provide additional assistance and regularly monitor the development of each student.

To this end, we are committed to the following four standards:

**Standard A - Equal Access**

Pelham Middle School is dedicated to providing access to the IB: Middle Years Programme to all students.

**Standard B - Adherence to Guidelines**

Pelham Middle School follows an Inclusion/Special Education Needs policy that is consistent with IB expectations while also adhering to state and federal guidelines governing the education of students with disabilities which is designed to protect the rights

of students by ensuring that everyone receives a free, appropriate, public education regardless of ability level (as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). In addition, Pelham Middle School follows a Response-to-Intervention (RtI) model which is a three-tiered framework providing intervention and educational support for all students at increasing levels of intensity based upon their individual needs. Pelham Middle School is designed to be physically accessible to all students, with elevators and ramps providing access to all areas of the building.

### **Standard C - Support**

Pelham Middle School supports its students with learning needs and behavioral challenges, including those classified as students with disabilities under IDEA regulations. Support for these students is embedded in the program implementation. This identified support is also provided for students with Section 504 Accommodations and some students who have been declassified but retain some program modifications. Plans are developed which ensure that children who have a disability as identified under the law receive Individual Education Program (IEP) accommodations and modifications to ensure their academic success and equal access to the learning environment. Screening tools are used to identify potential learning issues in incoming students. Testing, including assessments of cognitive ability and speech/ language, is performed by school psychologists and special education teachers. Existing supports are regularly reviewed to ensure these are effective. Inclusion at Pelham Middle School is supported by a wide range of school staff, including teacher assistants, counselors, social workers, psychologists, and speech and reading teachers. We feel strongly that every staff member in the building has a responsibility to support the inclusion of students, and that - when necessary - staff development should be provided to give regular-education teachers the tools they need to ensure student success. In addition, we acknowledge that parents play an essential role in helping to assess and address students' needs. In our community of teachers and learners, close collaboration between all stakeholders is key.

### **Standard D - English Language Learners**

Pelham Middle School supports its students whose first language is not English. These ELL (English Language Learners) are offered a state-mandated program which is individually based and dependent upon each student's initial screening and/or annual assessment. Classroom modifications are assigned and developed to meet the needs of each of these students. State-mandated testing accommodations may include extended time, separate location, tests provided in the student's native language, the ability to write responses in the native language, and the use of a translator, if necessary. Programs provided for ELL include integrated classes as well as dedicated ESL classes. These varied learning

opportunities, along with other building level supports and the aforementioned accommodations and modifications, ensure these students' academic success and equal access to the learning environment.

### **Support and Services Provided**

Access to the curriculum for students with special needs is provided via the least restrictive environment that is appropriate, and services are individualized to meet the needs of these students. Section 504 Accommodation Plans or Individual Education Programs (IEPs) do not serve as barriers to students' participation in the IB-MYP. Pelham Middle School offers a wide range of services designed to address the individual needs of students classified as having educational, emotional and/or physical disabilities. Individualized Educational Programs are required for students who have been evaluated and classified by the district's Committee on Special Education (CSE). Program options may include: consultant teacher, resource room, integrated co-taught classes, small group instruction, academic/life skills program, and a therapeutic program, as well as related services (e.g., speech therapy, occupational therapy, counseling, etc.). Other students may require a Section 504 plan, which provides reasonable accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities. All plans are reviewed annually, while records and documentation remain confidential, according to district policy and legal requirements.

### **Policy Review Procedure**

After the first year of implementation, the IB Steering Committee will revisit the Inclusion/ Special Education Needs Policy to ensure that it effectively meets the criteria and philosophy of an IB MYP school as well as the needs of our school and community. After that first year, teachers, principals, students, and other stakeholders may meet to review the policy as necessary.